

Was it Brian Lee's greatest clanger?

F.A. CUP SUICIDE!

—Horseman could have swung the replay

Slough Town 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

BRIAN LEE dropped a mighty bombshell, and probably the greatest clanger of his career as Wycombe Wanderers' manager, when he stood Tony Horseman down as substitute for Wednesday night's F.A. Cup first-round replay at Dolphin Stadium.

It was total, illogical, inexplicable suicide — just what Slough Town must have been praying for.

Not until the 68th minute did Horseman finally make an appearance, and he was soon at work adding a vital zip to Wycombe raids. But little more than 20 minutes was far too short a time for anyone to swing a tie ultimately decided by a penalty.

THE WASTED KEY

Horseman, leading Wanderers goal-getter, scorer of Saturday's equaliser, only recognised striker who looked likely to upset Slough's defence at Loakes Park, key to the second round and a home draw with Barnet—this was the man sitting, watching and waiting, while Wycombe threw over the forceful attacking tactics of Saturday's match for their safety-first policy.

In came midfield man Barry Baker instead to back up a defensive plan that did nothing but give the Rebels every incentive to push the play at their visitors.

Standards fell below those of the first, somewhat unspectacular, meeting, for neither side had enough up front to dominate proceedings.

And, simultaneously, tackles grew wilder, tempers shorter and good football scarcer.

This was the situation Horseman was introduced to. But nonetheless he had time to rattle the Slough woodwork and begin several constructive moves before the final whistle.

WHY?

Why the tactical switch away from attack? Surely not just because Slough had grabbed back ground advantage. It was the same Rebels' line-up out on Wednesday as last Saturday—and Wycombe showed first time round they were their betters.

Encouraged to think extra positive thoughts, the Rebels forced more corners in the opening 15 minutes than in the entire outing at Wycombe. Keith Blunt and Larry Pritchard, however, chalked up the first two shots of the night on Wanderers' behalf.

Blunt, in fact, plugged away from a distance at Slough's 'keeper Wolstenholme, who nonetheless withstood the challenge well.

John Delaney went off for four minutes' treatment on a shoulder injury, but bravely returned to release Hartridge from his short-lived role alongside Ted Powell in defence.

Eight minutes from the interval, Wolstenholme snatched Slough from disaster when their ever-reliable number four, Keith Mead, bodied a Hutchinson corner down towards his own goal.

TRADE IN SHOTS

The rivals traded a Johnny

Man-by-man summary

SLOUGH TOWN

Ian Wolstenholme: Wanderers found it hard to find a weak spot. John Hobbs: Saturday's goalscorer played a steady defensive role again. Micky Bell: Held his wing well. Keith Mead: Strong, steady influence on a Slough defence which collectively tended to be prone to the jitters at times. Ian McPhee: Improved on his original poor performance, but might have been in trouble had Wycombe's attack struck harder. Alf D'arcy: Slough skipper backed up his side's more attacking approach from midfield. Micky O'Sullivan: Just as enthusiastic as on Saturday but not quite the same worrying problem for Wycombe's backs. Steve Crosby: A quiet worker. Terry Reardon: Plugged away actively in front of goal. Joe Adams: Wednesday's match-winner and certainly the biggest threat throughout. Ray Hill: Quiet, somewhat unproductive display.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS

John Maskell: One major handling error towards the end from a

D'arcy lob, but generally gave his defence no reason to fret. Paul Fuschillo: Switched flanks. Kept his winger quiet. Keith Blunt: Once again kept the Slough defence guessing from long range, but seemed to be hanging back more in the second half. His late burst of "bad boy" tackling was totally out of his usual character. Ted Powell: Cool, calm and unflustered by having to do more of the running than usual with Delaney injured. John Delaney: His early shoulder injury didn't stop him from improving on Saturday's display. Les Hartridge: Used in several roles during the evening, and gave away the deciding penalty. Bernie Bremer: Wore the number seven shirt. Gave or take a shot or two, did little to upset Slough's rhythm. Barry Baker: Seemed to be swallowed up in midfield. Keith Searle: Still searching for his best form, could have made more of his role. Larry Pritchard: Gave Slough the occasional twinge of fright. John Hutchinson: Minus some of his early season flare. Tony Horseman (sub.): See match report.

Seven minutes later, Adams headed an up-and-under up-and-over the bar with Maskell covering. But soon it was Wolstenholme's turn to pull off possibly the save of the game after Bernie Bremer's drive.

When Horseman took over in place of Hutchinson, Wolstenholme came under immediate pressure. He foiled Blunt and Pritchard as the Wycombe attack began biting back more viciously than at any time in the evening.

Slough held them off through this uncertain phase, however, and the desperation of Wanderers' bid for an equaliser bubbled up. Paul Fuschillo earned himself a warning for a crunching tackle on Terry Reardon, while Blunt—no longer pushing forward—seemed to lose much of his normal cool.

THIRD WARNING

After warnings following bad fouls on Reardon and Adams, he luckily got away with a third speaking-to almost on time when scything down Reardon again. The Rebels' centre-forward was taken off and Tim Turl subbed out the closing seconds.

TRADE IN SHOTS

The rivals traded a Johnny Hutchinson shot with Ray Hill's drive in the 45th minute, but Slough were quickly pushing the visiting defence back after half-time, and in the 53rd minute came the decisive slip.

Referee Hart had no hesitation in penalising Hartridge for his challenge on Joe Adams inside the box to the left of goal, despite Wycombe appeals. Adams's spot kick rolled awkwardly to Maskell's right, catching the goalie swaying the wrong way.

An equaliser twice reared promisingly in the fiercely fought late stages. First Horseman's free-kick hit a post, then Keith Searle belted the ball high to dim the glimmer of hope kindled from a well-organised Wycombe move.

So Wanderers' tilt at Barnet in round two, and thence possibly to a glamour tie against one of the star attractions of English football, collapsed.

But then, as one club official had previously suggested: "We'd probably meet Dagenham in the third round".

Alas, glamour was not in Wycombe's stars this season.

M.W.

SLOUGH TOWN: I. Wolstenholme; J. Hobbs, M. Bell, K. Mead, I. McPhee, A. D'arcy, M. O'Sullivan, S. Crosby, T. Reardon (sub. T. Turl 90 min), J. Adams, R. Hill.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell; P. Fuschillo, K. Blunt, A. Powell, J. Delaney, L. Hartridge, B. Bremer, B. Baker, K. Searle, L. Pritchard, J. Hutchinson (sub. A. Horseman, 68 min).

Referee: Mr. A. L. Hart (Rotherhithe).

H.T. 1-0. Goalscorers: Slough-Adams (53 pen.).